

FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONFUSION

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Here's a game to whet your appetite, or (great expletives!) wet your appetite for spelling challenges.

The phrases below may be as familiar to you as your old stamping (or is it stomping?) grounds, but when it comes to spelling them, you may be in dire straights (or is it dire straits?). Like the cat that ate cheese and then breathed into the mousehole, I'm sure you're waiting with baited breath (or should that be bated breath?) and chomping (or perhaps champing?) at the bit. May your answers and mine jibe (or maybe jive?) completely so that you don't miss by a hare's breath (hare's breadth? hair's breath? hair's breadth?).

For each phrase that follows choose the preferred spelling. Answers are in Answers and Solutions at the end of the issue.

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| 1 all in vain/vane/vein | 26 pidgin/pigeon English |
| 2 anchors away/aweigh | 27 plain/plane geometry |
| 3 beyond the pale/pail | 28 pore/pour over an article |
| 4 bloc/block voting | 29 praying/preying mantis |
| 5 champing/chomping at the bit | 30 rack/wrack one's brain |
| 6 a ceded/seeded player | 31 raise/raze Cain/cane |
| 7 declare marshal/martial law | 32 reckless/wreckless abandon |
| 8 dire straights/straits | 33 rapped/rapt/wrapped attention |
| 9 doesn't faze/phase me | 34 reek/wreak/wreck havoc |
| 10 fowl/foul weather | 35 right/rite of passage |
| 11 a friend in deed/indeed | 36 a seamless whole/hole |
| 12 a full complement/compliment of | 37 a shoo/shoe -in |
| 13 give free rein/reign | 38 sic/sick the dog on someone |
| 14 grin and bear/bare it | 39 sleight/slight of hand |
| 15 a hair's/hare's breath/breadth | 40 sound bite/byte |
| 16 hail/hale and hearty/hardy | 41 spit and/spitting image |
| 17 to have a flair/flare for | 42 stanch/staunch the flow |
| 18 it doesn't jibe/jive | 43 strike a responsive cord/chord |
| 19 just deserts/desserts | 44 swear like a trooper/trouper |
| 20 a matter of principal/principle | 45 toe/tow -headed youth |
| 21 might/mite and mane/main | 46 toe/tow the line |
| 22 the old stamping/stomping grounds | 47 test one's metal/meddle/mettle |
| 23 on the lam/lamb | 48 to the manor/manner born/borne |
| 24 peak/pique/peek one's interest | 49 wait with bated/baited breath |
| 25 pi/pie in the sky | 50 whet/wet your appetite |